

Fr. Dan's Den: "We wait in joyful hope." On this Second Sunday of Advent we continue waiting for the coming of Jesus. How is our waiting? Is it, indeed, one of joyful hope?

Waiting is seldom easy. Whether we find ourselves waiting in traffic, the doctor's office or at the check-out counter, waiting can be exasperating. More often than not waiting can become a time of joyous frustration as opposed to joyful hope.

The author of today's second reading speaks about waiting for "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." As if this waiting is not enough. The author asks for something more. He writes: "Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace."

As we wait in joyful hope for Jesus, we too, need to make every effort to be found without spot or blemish, particularly the stain of sin. One of the key ways we can remove this stain is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is perhaps no greater way for us to prepare for the coming of Jesus than to go to Confession. Not only does this Sacrament allow us to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts, but it also enables us to begin anew. Nowhere else in life can we find this newness and peace.

The Deanery schedule for Reconciliation is as follows:

Saturday, December 10—St. Bart's at 11:00 AM

Monday, December 12—St. Gerard at 7:00 PM

Tuesday, December 13—St. Bart's at 7:00 PM

Wednesday, December 14—St. Susanna at 7:30 PM

Thursday, December 15—St. Irenaeus at 7:00 PM

Saturday, December 17—St. Bart's at 11:00 AM

Monday, December 19—St. Joseph, Verona at 7:00 PM

Please note that there will be no Confessions at St.

Bart's on Saturday, December 24. Nor will there be any Confessions on Saturday, December 31.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "There is a difference between the waiting of the prophet and the standing still of the fool." As we wait in joyful hope, do we yearn to be prophets or fools?

Thursday, December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a Holy Day of Obligation. The Masses for this Holy Day are

Wednesday, December 7 at 5:00 PM and Thursday, December 8 at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Please note that there is no Holy Hour this week because of the 5:00 PM Mass.

As we continue on waiting for Jesus at Christmas, we all no doubt have many things to do. One of the tasks of these days for many is shopping. St. Bart's can simplify this process through the offering of scrip. That's right; you can do all your shopping with us. Gift certificates are easy and practical gifts. Scrip is available throughout the week at the rectory and before and after the Sunday Masses in the main vestibule of the Church. Your purchase of scrip contributes to the financial operation of our parish.

In these days before the end of the calendar year, many people like to give gifts to various charities. Do not forget our Stocking Fund Campaign which runs until the end of the year. This money is exempt from Parish Share assessment. And do not forget to remember St. Bartholomew Parish in your will.

Many thanks to the Rapp-Turner Funeral Home for their donation of 12 turkeys at Thanksgiving for the needy.

Once again the Parish will sponsor a New Year's Eve Party. Make plans to join us.

Have a great week! And don't forget the Holy Day on Thursday.

St. Bart's Women's Group

The St. Bart's Parish Women's Group Christmas Party will be held this Tuesday, December 6, starting at 6:00 PM in Helzlsouer Hall. To make a reservation to join in on the festivities call Katherine at 412-798-9819, today! Sorry, there will be no reservations accepted at the door.

ST. JOHN FISHER CHRISTMAS CONCERT

St. John Fisher Church will host the Woodland Hills High School Acapella Choir, Chamber Choir, and Orchestra for a Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 11, 2005, at 4:00 PM in the Church. The public is invited to attend. A reception will follow. For more information, please call St. John Fisher Church at 412-241-4722.

School News with Mrs. Fleet

All are invited to attend our Scholastic Book Fair which will be held in school December 5 through 8 around 8:35 AM until 3:00 PM. This event will take place in the library. Consider this an easy way to Christmas shop for all ages. You will not have to deal with any traffic or crowds! What more can you ask?

Avon orders are available for pick-up on December 5 and 6 from 2:00 to 3:30 PM in school.

Progress reports will be distributed on Wednesday, December 7.

Please join us for Mass on Thursday, December 8, as we celebrate the Feast of Immaculate Conception. Mrs. McGreal and our third graders will help to plan our liturgy scheduled for 10:00 AM. **St. Bart's has gone to the birds!** Well, actually the Pittsburgh Aviary is coming to us on Friday, December 9 at 10:00 AM for an assembly. We should be flying high with new knowledge about our feathered friends.

As we move through this beautiful Advent season, please know that all of you are always in our prayers.

Thanks for saving Campbell product labels, Shop N Save receipts, and Box Tops for Education for us. We appreciate your helping hands.

Registrations are still open for all students in grades three-year-old preschool through eight. We do offer half- and full-day kindergarten sessions. For more information please call the school office at 412-242-2511.

Congratulations to Honor Students

The following students achieved honors from Oakland Catholic High School during the first quarter: Honor—Hilary Fello, Christine Gameros, Elise Hawthorne; Highest Honor—Brittany Restori.

Respect Life Meditation

(James 2:14-17) "...what good is it to profess faith without practicing it? Such faith has no power to save. If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food, and you do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that? So it is with faith that does nothing in practice. It is thoroughly lifeless."

We pray that the People of God, the Church, will fill heaven with prayer, while supporting efforts to alleviate the needs of expectant mothers and their unborn children.

Central Catholic Placement Test

Central Catholic High School's Placement Test for eighth graders wishing to attend Central Catholic next year is scheduled for Saturday, December 10, 2005. There is a \$10.00 registration fee to take the test. To register, please contact Brian Miller in the Admissions office at 412-621-7505.

Cafeteria Position Available

The Diocesan Purchasing Commission operates the lunch program at several of the surrounding schools in the area, including ours. A cafeteria position is available at Redeemer Lutheran School in Oakmont, 2.5 to 3 hours daily, no evenings, weekends, summers, or holidays. If you are interested, please call Cindy Miller at the Diocesan Purchasing Commission, 412-922-6400, extension 18.

St. Bede Parish Christmas Tree Sale

A wide variety of fresh cut Christmas Trees will soon be available at St. Bede Church (in the parking next to the church). Proceeds benefit the St. Bede Athletic Association. The Christmas Tree Sale will be held: December 3 and 4, from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM; December 5, 6, 7, and 8, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM; December 9 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM; and December 10 and 11, from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

Exile

Both Isaiah and Peter had the task of comforting and encouraging their communities during times of exile. The Israelites were in geographic exile from Israel; to them this was, in effect, the same as being in exile from their God. The early Christians, following the Resurrection, expected an immediate return of Christ in glory; they, too, felt in "exile" as the delay of the Second Coming grew longer and longer. All four of scripture's authors today—Isaiah, the psalmist, Peter, and Mark—hasten to help us see things in God's terms, not ours. They want us to know that we can never truly be exiled from God, or from God-among-us, since we know that when the faithful are gathered, Christ has come into their midst. Instead, we are encouraged today to do what we can from our end to shorten the time of our exile: to repent of our sins, to return our lives to the Lord, to live as people who seek the coming day of the Lord, when "kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss" (Psalm 85:10).

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Treasures from our Tradition

Have you seen *Antiques Roadshow* on television? People bring attic treasures to experts for appraisal and possible cash. Catholic attics, or maybe Grandma's wall, often hold a "sick call crucifix." It is a curiously bulky crucifix hiding a sliding panel and a secret compartment. Two tiny candles, a squeeze bottle of holy water, a stringy purple mini-stole, a tube of prayers, and some cotton balls are all hidden inside. The cross folds up to form a mini-altar that can be propped up by a sick person's bed. All that is needed is a priest with the oil of the sick and Holy Communion. Forty years ago, when these crosses enjoyed great popularity, the sacrament of the sick was often an encounter between priest and sick person alone, and often only in a last crisis of illness. Gradually, we are reclaiming the sacrament of anointing from this minimal, hidden expression. It is celebrated more richly and more often, even in the Sunday assembly, at every stage of illness and across a wide range of human suffering. The "sick call crucifix" is not a tradition, it is a curiosity from another time, but it reminds us of true tradition: we are a people who care for our sick, who accompany them in faith, and who sustain them with an experience of Christ's presence.

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Mass Intentions



MON., December 5 - Advent Weekday

10:00 A.M. Mary Lou Manuppelli (Robert Manuppelli & Family)

TUES., December 6 - St. Nicholas

10:00 A.M. Bob Smith (Sister & Brother)

WED., December 7 - St. Ambrose

5:00 P.M. People of the Parish

THURS., December 8 - Immaculate Conception

10:00 A.M. Arthur Lucas (C. Alicia DePastino/Marcy Marpes)

7:00 P.M. Edward Anick (St. Bart's Money Counters)

FRI., December 9 - Advent Weekday

10:00 A.M. Cecelia L. Dugan (Family)

SAT., December 10 - Advent Weekday

10:00 A.M. Anna Marie Thomas (Daughter Marie & Family)

5:00 P.M. Anthony B. Petrone (Petrone Family)

SUN., December 11 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:00 A.M. People of the Parish

10:30 A.M. Gloria Cicero DeJeet (Mother & Family)

Please remember in your prayers the sick, shut-ins, and hospitalized members of the Parish.

Prayers are also requested for the faithful departed.

David Furnier and John O'Connor

Giving Tree

Gift donations for the Giving Tree are due to the rectory by the weekend of December 17, 2005.

Thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Decorating

Mark your calendar now for Thursday, December 22, 2005, at 6:00 PM. We will be decorating the Church for Christmas that evening. All are welcome!



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